ANALYSIS OF TOURISM TRENDS AFTER COVID-19

Anna Davtyan

Rangsit University, Pathum Thani, Thailand

After the great boom of tourism industries all over the world, by recording approximately 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals in 2019, the unfortunate event of covid-19 changed the world and accordingly, the boom of the tourism industry. The world faced an unspeakable; pandemic, which brought losses of numerous lives, and bankruptcy of businesses, including tourism-related businesses. The economies that depend on tourism (a higher portion of GDPs) tried to re-open their borders to tourists as soon as the numbers of infected were not major in their countries.

Every and each country had regulations related to procedures regarding arrivals after covid-19, trying to minimize the risks and outbreaks of the virus in the country, major rules were that, tourists had to be vaccinated, take tests a maximum of 48 hours before the flight, etc... Naturally, tourists would more give priority to checking the location regulations, hygiene, sanitizing and wearing masks, etc.

From the responses of the conducted survey (Rangsit University 143 international students), it is found that, the youth still has the willingness to travel, but with a lower budget, compared with the budget before covid-19. Content and visiting friends and family trips will be popular types of trips after covid-19.

Countries have to develop and focus on making better experiences not only for international travelers, but also for domestic travelers, as visiting friends and family consists of trips locally with family and friends.

Keywords: tourism; trends; Covid-19

Introduction

Before covid-19 many countries considered tourism as a growing industry and a fair share contributor of the country’s GDP. It is known that governments would try to attract and direct more investments towards tourism sector mainly because tourism sector is in a strong interrelation with many sectors in the economy and that it creates triple spending: direct, indirect and induced (Davtyan, 2014).

Anna Davtyan

PhD., graduate of Rikkyo University, Tokyo
Lecturer at Rangsit University, Rangsit International College, Thailand
Research interests: international tourism, tourism impact on local society, community-based tourism, government stimulation of tourism and tourism macro-marketing, international marketing cybersecurity, digital media

E-mail: anna.d@rsu.ac.th
The future of tourism will be impacted by large-scale social, economic, political, environmental and technological changes, bringing new and often unseen challenges, threats and opportunities. These “megatrends” are slow to form, but once they have taken root, exercise a profound and lasting influence on human activities, processes and perceptions, including for tourism. Four megatrends are likely to have significant impacts and relevance for tourism: i) evolving visitor demand; ii) sustainable tourism growth; iii) enabling technologies; and iv) travel mobility. Exploring the multi-dimensional implications of these megatrends to 2040 is important to inform policy and shape the future of tourism (OECD, 2018).

Travel and tourism had become one of the most important sectors in the world economy, accounting for 10% of global GDP and more than 320 million jobs worldwide (before covid-19).

In 1950, at the dawn of the jet age, just 25 million people took foreign trips. By 2019, that number had reached approximately 1.5 billion, and the travel and tourism sector had grown to almost too-big-to-fail proportions for many economies. The global pandemic, the first of its scale in a new era of interconnectedness, has put 100 million jobs at risk, many in micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises that employ a high share of women, who represent 54 percent of the tourism workforce, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (Behsudi, 2020).

As can be seen from Fig. 1, the number of international travelers kept growing each year and UNWTO (2020) predicted 4% growth in 2020.

![Figure 1 - Number of international tourist arrivals worldwide from 2005 to 2022, by Region (in millions)](Source: Statista, 2023)

According to the first comprehensive report on global tourism numbers and trends of the new decade, the latest UNWTO (2020), this represents the tenth consecutive year of growth.

All regions saw a rise in international arrivals in 2019. However, uncertainty surrounding Brexit, the collapse of Thomas Cook, geopolitical and social tensions and the global economic slowdown all contributed to a slower growth in 2019, when compared to the
exceptional rates of 2017 and 2018. This slowdown affected mainly advanced economies and particularly Europe and Asia and the Pacific.

In Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) report, the world’s largest business travel association (2021), it is believed/forecasted that; from Setback to Surge: Business Travel expected to fully recover by 2024. Pandemic risk, vaccination rates, inflation, business traveler considerations, and travel volume return are among potential recovery challenges ahead, business travel recovery in 2021 proceeded at a slower, more cautionary pace than expected from a year ago. However, global business travel spending is expected to surge in 2022 with full recovery expected in 2024 ending the year on pace with the 2019 pre-pandemic spend of $1.4 trillion, and a year sooner than previously forecast.

Sharma et al.(2022) talks about the outbreak of Covid-19 and its impact on globally business challenges and their challenges, highlights few recent works of scholars and their mentions of the impact of the pandemic on the tourism industry (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2021).

Due to the contagious nature of the virus, the governments announced lockdowns and imposed restrictions on travelling, bringing the tourism industry to a grinding halt (Crossley, 2020; Ryu et al., 2020). Although some businesses are able to continue their work and are able to survive by going digital (Mehrolia et al., 2020), the tourism industry is struggling to survive the pandemic (Chen et al., 2022) as putting restrictions on travel is unavoidable to limit the spread of the virus (Sharma et al., 2021).

The tourism industry is of prime importance for a country as it uses a large number of population and contributes towards the gross domestic product of a country to a very large extent (Alam & Paramati, 2016; Sharma et al., 2022).

Literature review

Effects of covid-19

Currently, many tourism related literature discuss covid-19 and its impact on tourism industry and focuses on the positive and negative impacts of the pandemic. Other studies have documented the impact of various stakeholders on the development trends of the pandemic, which is critical to trace the impact on the tourism industry.

For example, studies have established that crisis communication, the resumption of marketing and stakeholder cooperation are the three key strategies for tourism recovery (Li et al., 2021).

Aldao et al. (2022) talks about positive and negative impact of covid-19 on tourism and industry and authors elaboration of the impact and positive effects are:

Vaccinations will have catalyst impact to travel, in the long run people will forget the fact and whole struggle, how countries cope with the pandemic, as crisis has a short memory, tourism will be back to normal.

People will have eagerness for having a quality time, crowded highlights will still remain to be, and people’s motivation to travel is above fear and anxiety.

Expectations and changes are always in place, especially after major events that take place in the world, reliance on low fares, increased numbers of personalized tourism, travel agencies will gain popularity, flexibility will become the most appreciated condition, people will gain benefits from digitalization and social media.
Negative effects are:

Lack of unified criteria on restrictions at supranational level, non-homogeneous set up of protocols countries regulations regarding steps that have to be taken in order to keep the spread of virus. People lost trust in the period of pandemic, there will be definitely, and a lack of trust directed to governments and travel services. As many countries kept changing the rules regarding the travel, procedure and people kept rescheduling their trips.

The need of getting out, the need of tranquility and relaxation, as people were very stressed during covid-19, reluctance to pay additional fees for safety.

Mobility restrictions, as international trips are allowed not to all destinations, unstable future scenarios, uncertainty for booking travel services in advance.
Trends
A trend can be defined as a generalized change in situation or behavior or a general direction in which things are transpiring. Within tourism, a number of different developments have led to changes in consumer behavior and business processes, meaning they are responsible for new tourism trends emerging. One of these developments has been a fundamental change in the way technology is used, especially with regard to artificial intelligence and machine learning. This has led to the increased adoption of robotics and AI-powered technology in hotels. It has also led to changes in customer behavior through the rise of voice control and voice search.

Howart (2023) talks in his article about top travel industry trends (2023-2026):
- Travelers go it alone.
  Solo travelling is becoming very trendy, solo travelers are big on social media, on Instagram 8.2 million posts are popping up with the hashtag/#solotravel directory. The posts are with content of all types of tourism, destination and activities.
- Travelers will crave local experiences.
  Travelers will pursue authentic experiences, distancing themselves from mainstream tourism providers and venturing into pastimes that feel more meaningful”.
- Consumers blend business and leisure travel.
  The concept of being location-independent, traveling and working remotely has become even more popular since the start of the pandemic.
  The hospitality industry is starting to cater specifically to digital nomads.
ColorWhistle (2023) researched and collected some of the travel trends that will come to life in 2023 and beyond, for being able to keep their clients aware of the current developing industry – travel and tourism.

In today’s world, people come across many transitions in climatic conditions, eating habits, dressing sense, etc. When this is on one side, even in this 21st Century, people’s enthusiasm and craze for traveling are not altered at any cause.

Therefore, the global travel and tourism industries are bringing many facilities and technologies to give the best experience for travelers. There are chances for travel agencies to begin the year 2023 successfully by making the travel experience a comfortable one for tourists and travelers.

Some of the trends are listed below:
- Traveling with virtual cash.
  Usually, travelers before taking a trip had to search for currency exchange centers or post offices or other financial centers to exchange their currency with the foreign currency. These traditional money concepts will come to a complete end by 2022, where everything is paid and bought with paperless cash!
- Biometrics & facial recognition.
  Biometric technology is rich in security. So, airport companies want to use it in their airport checking hubs. Plus, biometric technology consumes less time to spend on verifications. A traveler has many benefits in experiencing the biometric technology in airports during his/her travel
- Mobile Apps for filling visa.
  The mobile applications will go trending in 2022. An international traveler who is planning for a vacation has to be aware of the process of taking a visa.
Usually, it takes hours together to fill a visa application, sometimes hours become days. This is because small typos in filling the visa applications will lead to blunder mistakes which might delay visa approval.

- Experiencing virtual reality in real world.

To get inspiration about a touring spot, travelers have started to use virtual reality technology. By this, the traveler gets a pre-mentioned idea of which places to travel? How will the place look like? The virtual reality apps capture more or less the exact view of the spot.

- Instagrammable Inspirations.

At present, social media is turning the world upside down. It has become a part of each one’s daily life. According to Statistica (2021) social media users count will increase to 3.1 billion. That’s a huge number!

- Travel to ancestral places.

Flinn (2021) points out that the nature of the experience economy is: when a person purchases a service, they are buying a set of intangible activities carried out on their behalf but when they purchase an experience, they are paying to spend time enjoying a series of memorable events with which they can engage and connect in a personal way.

Moreover, it is important to remember that staging experiences is not about entertaining consumers, it is about engaging them, which most sources state, experience and engagement will more correlated than ever, after covid-19.

According to the HospitalityNet, 36% of people among the top getaway travelers are trying to take a trip to their ancestral places.

Forbes has conveyed that 50% of Americans, 89% of Indian people, and 69% of French people have traveled at least to one country of their heritage sites.

**Personalized travel activity**

Today, the advanced system of travel technologies has turned travelers to experience more personalized services.

As per the trends report from WeAreMarketing, 69% of travelers will be more loyal to a provider that personalizes their experiences.

Similar to Colorwhistle Choufany (2020) publishes the latest trends in Tourism Industry, a list as in form of opportunities for tourism industry.

Few are different or else, given more, those are:

- Safety & hygiene tourism trends.

Whether it is airlines, cruises, hotels, restaurants or bars, since the outbreak of covid-19, safety and hygiene standards have been absolutely paramount. With this in mind, there are a number of tourism trends that are related to this, such as increased cleaning, socially distanced seating, providing hand gel and enforcing masks in some settings.

- Eco travel.

Tourism trends are heavily influenced by the concerns and mores of the customer base. As a new generation becomes increasingly relevant in the marketplace, the ideals driving their purchasing decisions create new tourism trends. Eco travel is just one example of these tourism trends, reflecting a growing concern among today’s travelers for ethical and sustainable tourism options.

Eco travel includes simple changes, such as the availability of carbon credits when booking a flight or the option to rent an electric instead of a conventional vehicle. More
sophisticated examples might include tourism with a volunteer element, perhaps working on a nature reserve or engaging in conservation work. Choufany (2020), Aldao et al. (2022) also highlighted the aspects of health and safety, that it covers a wide range of different areas when related to tourism activity: sense of safety, hygiene, the destination health system and management; guidelines or protocols that a destination follows; application of social distance and health risk involved when visiting a destination. Sense of safety and governmental policies represented the key grounds for incentivizing tourists to travel back again after covid-19.

**Research methodology**

This study consist qualitative and quantitative research elements, recent literature, news, travel portals were analyzed. As well as, conducted a survey with designed a questionnaire with the focus of finding youth perception/prediction and opinion regarding current and future tourism trends. The questionnaire was distributed to international students of Rangsit University.

Due to the time constraint and scares of funds was unable to interview and distributed the questionnaire to wider audience, receive higher number of responses, accordingly statistical, theoretical deeper analysis did not take place in this work.

**Result and analysis**

Overall were collected 143 responses of different grades of international students.

For finding out the willingness for traveling after covid-19, during 2023, students were asked to share their international travel plans for 2023. From 143 students, 34 of them answered that they don't have plans for international travels during 2023, 40 of them answered that they have plans for visiting 2 countries and 42 of them answered that they a plan of visiting 1 destination internationally(see Fig. 3).

![Figure 3 - How many international trips are planned for 2023?](Source: author’s research)
To understand the difference in the willingness of traveling internationally or domestically, the following question in the questionnaire is the willingness to travel domestically in 2023 and how many trips they plan.

It is found that respondents are more willing to travel domestically than internationally and the number of trip that they are planning are higher than for international trips.

![Figure 4 - How many domestic trips are planned for 2023?](Source: author’s research)

From 14 students 22 are not planning any trips, 30 of them are planning 1 domestic trip, 33 of respondents are planning 2 trips, 29 are planning to travel domestically 3 times and 23 of them are planning to travel 4 times domestically.

For diving into the reason for traveling domestically, the following question covering a range of reasons/ options for travelling domestically was set: Visiting Family & Friends, Want to see more of the country, Want to get away, Overseas holiday was not an option, Want to do a specific activity, Change environment, Business trip (Fig. 5).

From overall respondents, 52 stated that the reason for domestic trips is visiting family and friends, 37 wanted to see more of the country, 26 wanted to get away and 10 of them would travel domestically because the overseas travel is not an option for many reasons.

As was predicted by many scholars, tour agencies, platforms that the solo travelers’ numbers might increase questionnaire consisted a question regarding the type of traveler they are: solo or prefer particular travel partner; friends, family and so on.

Only 14 (10%) students considered themselves as solo traveler, 20 (14%) prefer to travel with 1 friend, 34 (23%) of the respondents prefer to travel with family, relatives, etc., 56(40%) prefer to travel with many friends. Total 10 of them specified that they like to travel with their boyfriend or girlfriend, as well as close/best friend.

As this study is focusing on finding out tourism trends after covid-19 and what changes took place in tourists’ behavior (Davtyan et. al, 2023) after the worldwide lockdown and restrictions of travelling. The question regarding budget spent on travelling after and before covid-19 reviled an interesting aspect.
ANALYZE OF TOURISM TRENDS AFTER COVID 19

69 (out of 143) respondents answered that they would spend less than 1000$ before covid-19, 54 respondents would spend between 1000 and 2000$ for their trips and 16 of them were willing to spend more than 2000$ for a trip. There were answers in “other” options, such as 300$ per person or 400$ per person.

The answers for the budget for trips after covid-19 has different answer options as some scholars mentioned that the willingness to spend generously during the trips will decrease, due to financial effects of covid-19 and the uncertainty of the future, upcoming effects on the world’s economy (Fig. 7).
The choices of less than 500$ budget and between 1000$ to 2000$ budget for a trip were equally chosen, 44 (out of 143) respondents chose each of them. 32 respondents were willing to spend on their trips 1000$ and 23 respondents are willing to spend on their trips more than 2000$.

If we compare the numbers to the choice of the answer having a budget for trips between 1000$ to 2000$, before and after covid-19, we can see the numbers decreased, from 54 willing to spend between 1000$ to 2000$ as of before covid-19 it became 44, after covid-19.

The questionnaire included also the question for seeing the interests and opinion on regarding the types of tourism that respondents think will become popular after covid-19.
Opinions that the most popular type of tourism will be the content tourism (73 out of 143), as to an option of the answer, “Other”, 1 respondent mentioned that Instagram photos and Instagram famous locations are becoming more popular among Instagram users. 45 of the respondents think that reconnecting with family and friends will be the most motivation for trips and 21 thinks that food tourism will gain popularity after covid-19.

Other answers to this question, 1 respondent thinks that road trips, experimental tourism and nature tourism will gain popularity, another respondent mention about choosing to visit just beautiful destinations.

Few of 143 opinions regarding trends and tourism industry state/ readiness of going back to previous load, flow of tourists and generally shared thoughts about sightseeing are given below:

“I think people will travel abroad more frequently after covid-19 because before there were so many restrictions and requirements for travelling such as insurance, quarantine, and etc. but now finally all the restrictions are removed so we can travel freely. Before when we went to travel inbound, lot of restaurants was closed, most of the happening places were quiet and the tourist activities were cheaper because there were not many customers but now it’s getting back to its original price which is good for the economy too.”

“I think that as people gradually understand covid-19 and the development of targeted medical technology, covid19 will have less and less impact on travel. People will not add covid-19 to the consideration of travel. Of course, because covid-19 will affect more in the economy, people have to keep an eye on their wallets due to the negative impact of the past. Travel expenses may be reduced, but some people will spend on travelling.”

“Hotels will be in a tough spot as well as resorts due to likely a change in mindset on what are acceptable services. Standards are higher since costs are higher. If a person needs to be stuck in the same location for a while they expect it to be comfortable with good room
service and other services ready and available around the clock. Food is more expensive so every nickel and dime will be considered.”

“After covid-19, people travel to places that have been on their bucket list for a long time, as well as reconnecting with family/friends if the person lives or works in another country than their family. I believe vlog tourism and work/business tourism will increase after covid-19, as people want to explore the world other than just remote options. Furthermore, tourism/number of travelers might increase over time as people will want to see the world and explore new cultures and opportunities after not being able to travel for almost three years. I believe that the tourism industry will be solo traveler filled, as people are also becoming more independent, as well as starting to book the trips by themselves, rather than travel agency, or a group tour etc. However, this may depend on the country and the person’s knowledge of how to use social media. New trends in travel are solo traveling, food travel, photography/video travel and I believe some people will travel to Asia for reasons such as experiencing new culture in all aspects.”

“Honestly, I think there are not so much changes in tourism because people are doing the same thing before covid-19, but I am not sure that's my opinion. Covid-19 appears in a very short term and it disappears and after that it appears again. But people wear masks and use hand sanitizer during trip, as they are supposed to care about their health.”

“In my point of view, creative content will become the new trend since people have been trapped inside for too long that the social media has become the main entertainment in our life and the content we view daily seems more and more creative. Before Covid-19 we have the chance to go outside daily and have fun outside but when the lockdown happens the value of the environment or natural or human connection becomes more valuable in human’s mind. And we also tend to get bored easily when the content about outside world has been in the same form (theme song, editing etc.) Thus, this world right now demands more creative contents about tourism (this could start from a small thing, for creative advertisement). Other new trends I think we will see more are more hygienic routines. This is oblivious since people are now being more careful of the viruses. The last change I notice would be budget friendly trips covid-19 affects many families’ financial situations and this may be why more people are looking for more budget friendly trips and tips.”

“After the covid-19 situation most of the tourism industry need to change how to reach the customer needs and wants. Because during covid-19 most of the people change their lifestyle while the quarantine, if we need to follow the new trends we need to know where people want to go or spend time. And make sure that your tourism industry will have change, cause many currently tourism industry in these days make change how their service and treat their customers. Nowadays, our tourism industry have changes they improve their services and have good taking care of their customer to retain them to be our customer as long as possible.”

Conclusion

The focus of this study is to find out the trends and types of tourism that will become popular after covid-19, as well as the willingness to still travel, and changes in the budget that is dedicated to the trips. Findings reveal that there will be still a wish to travel, see new places, have a change of scenario, or/else visit friends and family. As globalization takes place, more and more people live in countries, other than their countries of origin.
ANALYZE OF TOURISM TRENDS AFTER COVID 19

Because of covid-19, those who were planning trips during covid-19 or even not planning a trip started visiting their families and friends (Simola, 2022). It has been found that the most popular type of trip can become content tourism followed by visiting family and friends. Another major finding is that amount of the spending on tourism that, specifically, the youth is willing to spend is decreased from the amount that they were willing to spend, after covid-19.

The majority of the survey population is strongly opinionated on the fact that people will still plan trips, although there is a fear of safety, hygiene, health regulation, and virus out bakes, as we all look for new experiences, and changes in scenarios.

References:


96


*Paper submitted* 22 February 2023  
*Paper accepted for publishing* 19 April 2023  
*Paper published online* 30 May 2023